

AN
INQUIRY
INTO THE
EFFECTS
OF
PUTTING A STOP

TO THE
African Slave Trade,

AND OF
Granting LIBERTY to the SLAVES
IN THE
BRITISH SUGAR COLONIES.

By the AUTHOR of
The ESSAY ON THE TREATMENT AND CONVERSION
OF AFRICAN SLAVES IN THE BRITISH
SUGAR COLONIES.

L O N D O N :

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Advertisement.

THE present inquiry was originally intended to have made a part of the Author's Essay on the subject of Slavery. But by the advice of those, to whom the propriety of that publication was submitted, it was suppressed, till matters should become ripe, and mens minds be prepared for the discussion. The Author is now obliged to publish it, perhaps prematurely, in defence of the principles of his work.

The Monthly Reviewers, in their Review, June 1784, were pleased to give a criticism on the Essay, which, considering it as a composition, was perhaps full as favourable as it deserved. The writer never has published either for reputation or profit, never has acted the Author, but when his opportunities and situation pressed him into the service of his country and his king. Praise or blame in a Review could, therefore, be to him a matter only of imaginary moment: and were it not so, that impartiality, which

alone can support such a work as theirs, must render it impertinent in an Author to thank them for their commendation, and vain to reproach them for their censure.

But that feeling and sentiment, which first suggested to the Author the discussion of this subject, will not suffer him to be indifferent to its success. The Author, while arguing for the abolition of slavery, is represented as a friend to the slave trade; and, while treating of a subject sufficient to soften the most obdurate heart, is censured for shewing less enthusiasm and ardour than Rousseau and Reynal have affected, when labouring only to make palatable a poison aimed at every thing of worth and dignity in human nature. It is true, in their Review of July, they have, on his remonstrance, candidly said, "they have perhaps expressed themselves without sufficient accuracy," in representing him as a friend to the slave trade, and they have subjoined a note from his book, which enables the Reader to judge for himself. This, as far as regards his character, ought to be satisfactory to him. But the charge remains
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against his book ; “ It speaks with extreme
 “ caution of the horrid trade.” Now there
 is not a passage in it, that he trusts can bear
 such an interpretation ; but several that con-
 demn it in pointed terms. It was not within
 the plan of what was published to treat
 directly of it ; but when it came in his way,
 it found no quarter. However, to put the
 matter out of dispute, he offers the follow-
 ing article to the public. If his plan be
 objected against as visionary, he shall only
 answer, that every thing must have a be-
 ginning ; and that there are many parts of
 the slave coast, where the inhabitants are
 sufficiently polished to be capable of carry-
 ing on the manufacture of sugar, planting
 tobacco, and indigo ; that they already have
 rice of a more valuable quality than that of
 the Carolinas.

With respect to his want of ardour and
 enthusiasm, as if he betrayed the interest
 he pretends to espouse, he answers : Indis-
 criminate blame never was intended. Plan-
 ters are like, are not worse than, the common
 run of men ; many would not lose by com-
 parison with the better sort of people in

Britain. It is their situation, it is the very nature of slavery, that leads to all that inconsiderate oppression and suffering which take place in the relation of master and slave. He has accordingly observed, that these causes almost universally operate more strongly in adventurers from Europe, than in natives of the colonies. Now the intention of his book was to convince and conciliate, not to inflame;—to shew that the master's true interest was to be found on the side of liberty, and of moral and religious improvement, not in niggardly pinching, not in stripes, chains, and nakedness. But so intimately is the subject connected with sentiment, so naturally did a warmth of expression mix with every part, that the Author's great aim in every transcription has been to soften whatever could be supposed capable of offending. And after all the severity, that moderation and his regard for individuals called for in the correction, better judges, who decided ultimately on the work, thought proper to prune not only words, phrases and sentences, but whole paragraphs, so as often to leave the expression naked, and the connection obscure, rather than suffer any improper

proper warmth to appear. After submitting this account to the Reader, that unblushing, unprincipled monster Rousseau (see his Confessions) is welcome to possess, unenvied by the Author, all *the gloom and ardour* for which he is celebrated.

The Author takes this opportunity of observing an objection made by some pious persons to the reformation proposed by him, drawn from the ill success of his own private endeavours to instruct slaves. He offered it as a strong argument, to shew the necessity of advancing the condition of slaves, before they can be made objects of religion; or rather to shew, that civil privileges and religious instruction must go hand in hand. If this be duly weighed, the objection here mentioned must conclude greatly in favour of his plan.

This objection has given him the more chagrin; because he does not find in it that attention to the scope of the argument, which its importance requires. His aim is to prove Africans objects of religion; the advantages of which are chiefly to the slaves

themselves. In conformity with the generous spirit of Christianity, and to make their masters propitious to his views, he proves even to demonstration, that every degree of liberty conferred on them would be so much gain to their present masters, and, if conferred in proportion as their faculties opened, would facilitate the reception of religion among them. Hence arises in his plan the union of liberty and religion both slowly advancing together, without any abrupt or violent change in the condition of the slaves themselves. He is clearly of opinion, that the distinction of master and slave never was meant by the God of nature to be an object of society, and the effects of the abolition of slavery in Europe confirm his judgment; but he is also of opinion, that since slavery has taken place, its strict discipline may be made subservient to the purposes of religion.

Nor is there any thing in the account of the author's own slaves to countenance this despondent conclusion. In the last nine years it is to be observed, that he had made considerable steps. He should indeed have remarked, that the principal part of his
 slaves

slaves were grown up when they came from Africa, and therefore never could perfectly acquire the English language, nor form any adequate ideas of any general abstract terms with which they were not acquainted in their own country, but that his few creoles were particularly sensible and acute.—Still the success of the Moravians, which he finds is much more complete, and truly pleasing to the pious mind, than he from his former information could have represented it, is a convincing proof that very considerable advances may be made among the negroes, even in their present state. And, as the pious divine, who conducts the labours of these truly apostolical preachers, observes, Christianity insensibly draws after it relaxation of slavery and personal privileges. Oppression is often unwillingly forced to draw back his heavy hand from meek and willing submission.

But whatever be the consequences, the author must continue generally to insist on the propriety and even necessity that liberty and religion should advance slowly together. A Heathen slave is less valuable than a Christian

stian slave ; this last is much less valuable than a Christian freeman. We want every motive that can be drawn from freedom and religion to secure propriety of conduct. The negroes have two classes of friends, one that looks chiefly to liberty, while the other regards only religion. Suppose them free untutored heathens. There are crowds of unprincipled idle thieves and robbers let loose on the public. Suppose a Christian slave offering up with his master his devotions to their common Father on Sunday. See him on Monday morning, by the caprice of a boy overseer, held with his face downwards by his hands and feet, till his back be furrowed with the cart-whip, his flesh torn in pieces, and his whole body rendered one loathsome wound. While humanity gives her tear of pity, can religion smile or sanctify the horrid oppressive relation of master and slave, that makes such havock in the claims of brotherhood. But why may not both classes unite to vindicate from oppression and heathenish ignorance the ill-fated race, why grudge each other's claims, and leave oppression and tyranny to profit by their opposition ?

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I N Q U I R Y, &c.

IT may be asked, supposing the African slave trade stopt, and the negroes on our sugar colonies made freemen, how will the measure affect the trade and interest of Great Britain and her colonies? Will not a gainful commerce with Africa be shut up? Will not our sugar colonies, if peopled with freemen, despise the rule of Britain, because they do not feel it, and join themselves to America? In this case, will not a great source of national wealth be cut off, and that nursery for seamen, on which our navy depends, be greatly contracted?

I state the argument in the strongest manner for those who favour slavery, and shall not use one expression to explain away its force. I am seriously of opinion that the sugar trade, with which that for slaves is connected at present, is of the utmost importance

portance to the state ; and that any sudden shock, that affects it, will be widely and deeply felt : and it must be confessed, that several of the sugar colonies shewed, in the beginning of the late disputes, strong signs of an unaccountable bias to the ideal empire of America.

North America is now separated for ever from the British state ; and though one must continue to wish that the operation had been accompanied with less violence, and had left a less ugly scar behind it, yet neither sentiment nor policy will permit the friend of Britain to desire a reunion. While Americans remember the methods by which they acquired their independency, they must be suspicious of every thing wherein Britain is concerned. It will remind them of the circumstances of a contest, which brought both parties to the brink of ruin. No dependence can be placed in the forming any new connection with them, where they themselves shall not have the advantage, or where they can treat with other nations on the same or equal terms. Nor can any treaty be lasting, which is made with a people
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where a designing demagogue, working on an ignorant town committee, can prescribe to the legislature. We shall therefore have no tie over them but conveniency; and we are free to settle our trade, and accommodate ourselves in the manner that will best suit our own purposes, without taking into account how it may probably affect them. We shall by and by apply this reasoning to our subject.

We have now upwards of 200 years traded with Africa in human flesh, and encouraged in the negroe countries wars, rapine, desolation, and murders, that we might be supplied with that commodity. The avarice with which we crowded the slave ships, and the caution that self-preservation made necessary to guard against their rising during the voyage, have destroyed in almost every instance a considerable proportion. The seasoning of them in our islands has in general cut off still more; and those that have survived in too many cases, have been, to say no worse, preserved only for hunger, stripes, and oppressive labour. On the whole, we have considered the trade only
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as a matter of gain ; and as such [in any probable future state of our sugar colonies, it cannot be reckoned higher, in every possible view, than the supplying of the wants, and reaping of the labour of half a million of people.

But suppose that by establishing factories, and encouraging civilization on the coast of Africa, and returning some of our West Indian slaves to their original country, we should try to make up for our past treachery to the natives, and guard against the views of the Americans on our sugar colonies, by instructing the inhabitants in the culture of tobacco, indigo, cotton, rice, &c. to barter with us for our manufactures, and supply us with those articles, our demand for which has been so advantageous to America, and so well enabled her to set up for herself. Were Africa civilized, and could we pre-occupy the affections of the natives, and introduce gradually our religion, manners, and language among them, we should open a market, that would fully employ our manufacturers and seamen, morally speaking, till the end of time. And while we enriched

ed ourselves, we should contribute to their happiness. For Africa, in its highest probable state of culture, could not possibly interfere with the staple of Britain, so as to hinder an extensive and mutually advantageous trade from being carried on between the countries. The great difference of climate and soil must always distinguish the supplies and wants of each.

Suppose, then, (and let it be attended to that I only suppose it) the sugar colonies subdued, or incorporated willingly with America, we might carry on a much more useful and extensive trade, than hitherto has been done, in every American and West Indian article with free people in Africa, without making them any burdensome loans, or being under any uneasy alarms about them. And without attempting any monopoly, or insisting on any preference, the goodness of our manufactures, and spirit of our traders, must always continue to command the most valuable branches of that commerce. Nor need it be a vain idea to expect in time to be supplied from Africa with various valuable wines in exchange for
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our staple commodities, instead of paying for them in money to our more northern rivals.—How must even this distant thought of the subject warm the heart, while it contemplates, as gained to the true religion, and to legal society, not a colony, but a continent, whose barbarous manners, and brutish ignorance, have so long disgraced the human character, and sunk it in sloth and depravity well nigh below compassion!

Should it be objected, that if we abandon the African trade, our rivals will extend their share in it, by which their wealth will be immediately increased, and their sugar colonies improved to the certain advancement of their, and as certain loss of our, naval importance, I might leave the answer to the man of morality and sentiment; but I fear not to encounter it in a political view. That the African trade is in itself destructive to our seamen, is known to every person who has an acquaintance with it. Indeed a mortality among his crew in the middle passage (from Africa to the West Indies) is a pleasant thing to a Guinea captain,

captain, of which he is not often disappointed. It saves the ship a great expence in wages ; for many more mariners are wanted to collect the slaves on the coast, than to navigate the ship after she is fully loaded. And it is not obscurely hinted, that ill usage, at least, has often been tried, in order to produce it ; which if it has not its full effect on the passage, makes the seamen quit the ship as soon as she arrives in the West Indies. I mean not here an undistinguishing censure : however oddly it may sound, I have, in this line, known men of feeling, that were far above such vile notions of parsimony. But the greatest advocate for the trade will not say, that these last are the most numerous party.

Now if the slave trade were changed for an ordinary commerce, or mutual barter of commodities with Africa, this temptation to destroy or dissipate seamen would be taken away. Some ships would load on the African coast directly for Britain ; others would load with cattle, mules, rice, pipe slaves, &c. for the sugar colonies. One great cause of an alarm in the sugar colonies from the checking of their intercourse with Ame-

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rica, is the loss of a market for their rum. This might be most profitably exchanged, by fitting it for the African market, and giving it in return for African commodities.* The quantity of goods exchanged for slaves in Africa, is perhaps the least object of that commerce. The annual British exports to Africa are not estimated higher than £.500,000, including a considerable quantity that is usually exchanged with American and other foreign traders on the coast; about £.50,000 of this is returned in ivory, gold dust, &c. The greatest part of profits of the slave trade is raised on the sugar planter. It is true, slaves grow every year dearer on the coast, in proportion as the Africans become better acquainted with the value set by the white traders on their wretched countrymen. But at their highest price they have seldom, if ever, come up to one third of what they sold for in the West Indies, if valued as the goods for which they were bought were shipped in Britain. Till lately, a great proportion was bought on the coast, at a sixth part of what

* The slave ships generally return from the West Indies in ballast, and they go out to Africa but lightly freighted. The expence therefore of carrying rum to Africa cannot be considered as high, or capable of enhancing the price.

the planter was obliged to pay for them. It is also to be remarked, that our present trade to Africa is confined to a few tyrants, and their brokers. But were the country once civilized, every person in it, who could labour with his hands, would make a demand on our manufactures, and extend our commerce. The change then proposed here, so far from lessening our trade, and the number of our seamen, would extend the one, and preserve and increase the other in an almost inestimable proportion ; and we have plainly shewn, that its effect on the trade of the new empire of America ought not to be the object of our concern.

To the objection that our quitting the slave trade would throw a profitable branch into the hands of our rivals, would improve their sugar colonies, and advance them in naval importance, we answer, that this commerce can continue in no hands longer than the negroe countries remain in a state of brutish barbarism ; for when they become civilized, it must cease of course. And from our having been the most forward in this scandalous traffick, it becomes us to be the first to labour in effecting a reformation.

Were the tyrants on the slave coasts made sensible, that riches consisted in the number and wealth of their subjects; instead of going to war to make prisoners, and sell them for slaves, to be carried to a distant climate, among a strange people, they would contend in encouraging the greatest possible numbers to settle in and cultivate each his own territory, and would try to intercept those sent down to the slave market from the inland parts. The only effect therefore that this consideration respecting our rivals should produce is, at once, to set heartily to the work, that they may have the less time to reap advantage from the circumstances.

But it is a notorious fact, that a considerable proportion of our African trade for the last 25 years has been actually directed to the supplying of the French colonies with slaves, and that the improvement arising thence contributed to enable them to make that formidable appearance with their navy in the beginning of the late war, which in the general opinion threatened to bring our existence, as a naval power, to an end. Now, on the supposition that our slave trade is to continue on its former footing, and to be

be directed as before (perhaps, considering our superior mercantile activity in a more profitable way for our rivals, than if they were to carry on the whole trade immediately with Africa) to the aggrandisement of our rivals, I in the strongest manner insist, that the subject calls for the most serious deliberation, and the most pointed inquiries both from administration and parliament. I have long foreseen the fatal consequences of it, with an heart-felt concern for my country. And surely it deserves to be discussed, whether a branch of trade, confessedly of some importance, but confined to two or three ports, ought at the expence of every human feeling to be put in competition with our future naval superiority; or, if it must be preserved, whether it should not be confined to the demands of our own colonies. If I be asked the question, should we refuse, will not our rivals procure their supplies from other hands? I may answer by another question; if we deliberately contribute to our rivals naval importance, shall we deserve pity when we are crushed under it? But the truth is, if we were to abandon the trade, two thirds of the whole must fall to the ground; for all

other nations have already their shares in it according to their genius and demand.—It may perhaps not be generally known, that there are now English agents at Madrid, treating with the Spanish ministry for the annual delivery of 80,000 African slaves in the Spanish colonies.

But in the civilization of Africa we have a certain remedy against this danger. The French planters, by living as farmers on their plantations, and cultivating a fresher and more luxuriant soil than is contained in our colonies, and being less dependent than we are on foreigners for provisions and other stores, can raise sugar at two-thirds of its usual price in the British colonies; whose proprietors live generally in Europe, and require large remittances to support them, while other managers and their families must also be maintained to do their duty on their plantations, and neither cattle nor provisions are raised on them to lessen the expence. I reckon twenty-five shillings sterling per cwt. on the spot to be a very moderate saving price for sugar in some of the British colonies, and to be equal to

to about sixteen shillings in the French colonies. But such sugar is raised in the East-Indies by free people for three shillings and four-pence per cwt. Nor is there reason to doubt, that it might be raised by freemen in Africa, if not at so low a price as this last, yet surely much below even the French price. Africans, under the pressure of slavery, are the manufacturers of sugar and rum in the colonies; why may they not be equally so in their own country working for themselves? Were this event brought about by the civilization of Africa, it would be impossible to raise sugar, that could command the market, by the expensive culture of slaves. And if the French persevered, they could not, by the utmost strictness of regulation, supply more than their own country; and their trade with the sugar colonies, instead of bidding fair, as at present by our help, to engross a great share of the European and American markets, must then be confined to their home demands.

If we continue to encourage our slave trade for the supply of the French colonies, (that of the Spanish colonies is yet only

ideal) such is the extensiveness and fertility of their islands, particularly Hispaniola, such the frugality of their planters modes of life, that in less than twenty years, even in spite of our enormous bounty of twenty shillings per cwt. they will worm us out of every foreign market for sugar. This ability on the part of our rivals of extending indefinitely their sugar market, which must in time draw after it a naval superiority, requires to be solemnly considered, at least as far as we contribute to it, that those methods may be embraced, that can best counteract its effects respecting us, and help to preserve our rank as a naval power. After laying all this before the reader, we may confidently conclude, that the African trade is more confined in its utility, than is generally imagined, and that of late years it has contributed more to the aggrandisement of our rivals, than of our own national wealth.

We come now to consider the probable consequences to our own sugar colonies, that may be expected from advancing the condition of their slaves. That Britain has a majority in them attached to her laws and
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her interest, it would be ungenerous not freely to acknowledge; and whatever prejudices existed among them against a connection with her, when compared with her rival, they have in a great measure been done away in the small islands, by their late experience of the nature of a French government. Still it is not to be concealed, that in several of them there is a strong lurking bias for the new empire of America. The conduct of Barbadoes and Jamaica, in the beginning of the late contest, marked this too strongly to admit of a contradiction; the restless emigrations from the sugar colonies thither continue to mark it. The Americans indeed have not yet been able to give any specimen of liberality of sentiment to encourage this bias, or of advantages to be gained by espousing their cause. But that individuals, who have occasion to wish for an easy method of paying debts, should delight in change, even when it promises little, needs not to be wondered at,

But supposing this bias, and the propriety of it, still it is a doubtful point, if any considerable share of West Indian propriety will
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be in the families, who now possess it, at that period when Britain and France shall be so weak, and America so strong in naval force, as to allow of our sugar islands being added as an appendage to the American empire. Though it may be an object of deliberation with whom they may best be connected, yet it will not be disputed that they can never think of setting up for themselves. They must ever continue to belong to some one or other naval power; and surely from present appearances no period can be assigned, when that power shall be America. Yet suppose every thing to happen as speedily as it is fondly imagined, and observe the consequences,

America, under a republican government, can never be but a disjointed unwieldy state, which nothing but common danger can possibly unite in one purpose. If the sugar islands be connected with them, it must be by conquest, when they are become superior at sea to the European naval powers. By the maxim on which America separated from Britain, no countries, between which seas intervene, can be incorporated together.

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The sugar colonies, therefore, can never hope to be allowed to partake of any particular American constitution. They must be governed as conquests belonging to the union. When they were first settled, it was by Englishmen intitled to all the privileges and laws of the mother country, and preserving all the rights and claims of citizens. But when subdued by an American squadron, they will be considered as a despised part of an hated people. Some American rice or tobacco planter, who perhaps has the clanking of the chains of his own famished slaves ringing in his ears, will make flaming speeches against sugar planters. He will call them inexorable tyrants over helpless slaves. He will advise to have them treated as slaves; and he will offer himself to be the instrument, because he is well acquainted with the mode.—When this desired change commences in the sugar colonies, what a fine outlet will there be for all the turbulent spirits of America in filling the departments of law, police, customs, and every civil establishment, not omitting the confiscations, that sagacious interest will discover or make. Perhaps, when too late,

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the indolent rule of Britain, then no more, may be an object of regret.

Again: Suppose our sugar colonies a favoured part of this empire, when will America be able to give them the same high prices for their staple, that Britain has long afforded them? As the children of Britain, their planters had the monopoly of her market. They cannot belong to America, till she has driven out every European power, and seized their colonies for herself. She will consider herself under no particular tie to give them the preference, but will supply her wants from the cheapest market. Farther, money (the foundation of high prices) can never be in plenty in a country, that is not far advanced in manufactures. Politicians have not yet fixed the time, when the population of America shall be supposed able to manufacture for herself, far less for a foreign market. Whenever, therefore, our colonies are subjected to America, the price of sugar in them must fall one half, and every proprietor must become a bankrupt; for their opulence, their very being as planters, depends on their union with Britain.

Suppose

Suppose then none but freemen inhabiting the sugar colonies, they can propose no benefit by changing their protector. Nay, it must continue to be their interest to cultivate, and even maintain, at the hazard of their lives, an union with their mother country, in whose government they share, who alone can be expected to rule them with a mother's indulgence, who alone can afford them a price for their commodities equal to the expence of their culture. Yet, this being the case, why have we such exaggerated accounts of the necessity of their intire dependence on the new states? Why do they not patiently suffer some temporary inconveniency, till matters can be settled on their new foundation?

Such indeed is the growing demand for sugar in Britain and Ireland, as to call for all that will ever probably be produced in our remaining islands. Doubtless they (Jamaica especially) are capable in themselves of producing much more than they have ever yet sent to market. But such have been the consequences of the several events, that have happened within these last twelve years,

years, that in any case it will be long before they can much exceed what they have formerly made; nor can they possibly increase their quantity so fast, as it probably will be called for. But as soon as any revolution destroys the monopoly of the British market, the British sugar colonies must dwindle into insignificancy.

One reason should ever induce West Indian proprietors to prefer a connection with an European power to one with America. Europe must ever be dependent on the West Indies or Africa for this now necessary of life, sugar. Europe is therefore the proper market for sugar, and it must be the interest of the planter to have a particular country in Europe, where he can lodge his produce, till he can send it to the place of consumption. And where trade is freest, and the merchants have most money, and give the longest credit, (in all which Britain hath the advantage) will be the best spot for fixing their staple. We might add here, that the situation of things, and the manners prevailing in America, must change greatly, before that country becomes as agreeable a

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retreat as Britain to the rich man or the valetudinarian. Setting therefore aside long habits of acquaintance, the sameness of laws and customs, it must also, in respect of interest, continue to be the planters wish, that Britain may ever be able to protect her colonies, and keep them united to her government. And the advancing of the condition of their slaves, or even the communicating intire freedom to them, can make no difference in the nature of the union, will rather enable the colonies to defend themselves, and do their part to preserve the connection, whereon their own prosperity depends. And it otherwise indisputably appears to be the proprietor's interest to employ only freemen on his plantation.

If it be asked how are sugar plantations to be cultivated, without the usual supplies of slaves from Africa; I answer, on old settled plantations, such supplies are only now necessary from the original ill assortment of the sexes, the oppressive manner in which they have been worked, and the niggardliness with which they have been fed. Had they been treated with humanity, and had

had their population, instead of being checked by every vile method, been encouraged, the slaves, brought into our old colonies, would long ago have been so greatly multiplied, as to have afforded sufficient numbers to have peopled the islands acquired by the peace of 1763. There are now sufficient numbers in the several islands to do this in the gradual manner, that will be most profitable in the end, if we begin even thus late to treat them generally like human creatures.

But I have not the vanity to imagine that any thing advanced here, or any thing, however just or practicable, that can be proposed by speculative men, will operate at once on the public. The utmost that reasoning can be expected to do, is gradually to correct and inform common opinion, and change insensibly the popular way of thinking. But suppose a statute enacted, that the present slave trade should cease after a period of three or six years, every planter would immediately set himself seriously to stock his plantation, and to give such orders for the treatment of his slaves, as would favour
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their health and population. This in the mean time would divert our slave trade from the improvement of the French colonies to that of our own : and the end of the period would find the several islands in a state of opulence and happiness that they never yet have experienced, and prepared for that extension of privileges, and unexcepting freedom, which is the scope of our argument. But in making this supposition, I mean not to be accountable for those barbarities, and outrages to humanity, that the shortest existence of the slave trade must in the mean time necessarily occasion.

On the supposition that the sugar colonies, either by their own choice, or the events of war, are separated from Britain, is suggested the possibility of our being supplied with sugar from Africa. Indeed the improvement of Africa is a compensation which we owe for the horrid barbarities we have been instrumental in procuring to be exercised on her sons, both in their native country, and in the West Indies : and certainly we might proceed to great lengths without affecting our sugar colonies ; rather they might get many other supplies than

slaves from Africa. We mean nothing hostile to our colonies by the plan. Such is indeed the nature of their connection with Britain, that nothing but unavoidable necessity should dissolve it. They were settled by Englishmen, with English money, on the faith of a monopoly of the British market. Without this monopoly they could not continue to be cultivated. On the other hand, hitherto the whole of their profits has been wealth added to the British stock. The bond therefore is reciprocal, and ought not to be weakened on one side, till it has been cancelled on the other. The colonies cannot find an equivalent for the British market; Britain will not soon find a nursery for her navy equal to the West Indian trade, should she by any revolution lose it. He who is a friend to the one must consult the interest of the other; for their prosperity consists in their union. Nor can Britain take any step in contradiction to it without forfeiting her honour, nor the colonists without risking their possessions. They must exchange concessions; the colonists suffering inconveniencies, rather than injure the commerce and navigation of Britain; Britain sacrificing advantages that her superiority in money

money and manufactures may give her to preserve her colonies in a condition to supply her market with sugar. But what is mutually to be surrendered will be discovered best from the level, on which things settle naturally of themselves, if we prevent it not by our precipitation in fixing regulations, that cannot be reclaimed, before things have accommodated themselves to their new state; and much might be done for Africa, and great advantage drawn from it, without losing sight of this purpose.

I shall here subjoin an extract of a letter which I have just received from that humane intelligent sea officer, who favoured me with the letter that closes the discussion of the capacity of negroes in the Essay, and who in his late command on the coast of Africa laid himself out for information on the subject, to see what could be suggested or proposed to check or give a new turn to the slave trade. His stay on the coast was short; but did every one, according to his opportunities, apply with the like sentiment and good-will to collect facts, it would soon enable us to strike some plan out to put an

end to this diabolical commerce, or at least strip it of its present horrors.

“ When the Portuguese extended their discoveries along the coast of Africa, they were very assiduous in introducing the Christian religion in that part called the Grain Coast, from Cape Mount to Cape Palmas. They were at first successful ; but when they emigrated to the Brazils, the negroes relapsed into their former idolatry. Many of the negroes at Goree are Mahometans, but in general they are Pagans of the religion and language of the Joliffs. The French have been industrious to teach them manners, and their language ; but have paid no attention to religion. I visited all the chiefs of the negroes in our settlements from Santa Apollonia to Athera, which is upwards of 250 miles, and found the police and punishment of all crimes supported by the slave trade. Those who commit crimes or trespasses against their laws, are, at the decision of twelve elders, sold for slaves for the use of their government, and the support of their chiefs. Theft, adultery, and murder, are the highest crimes, and, whenever they are detected, subject the whole family to slavery. But
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any individual condemned to slavery for the crime of his relation, may redeem his own person, by furnishing two slaves in his room. Or when a man commits one of the above cardinal crimes, all the male part of his family are forfeited to slavery; if a woman, the female part is sold. While on the coast, I saw instances of this sort so truly cruel, as made my very bosom bleed. This traffick in crimes makes the chiefs vigilant. Nor do our planters, who purchase them, use any pains to instruct them in religion, to make them amends for the oppression thus exercised on them. I am sorry to say they are unnaturally averse to every thing that tends to it; yet the Portuguese, French and Spaniards, in their settlements, succeed in their attempts to instruct them, as much to the advantage of their commerce, as of religion. It is for the sake of Christianity, and the advantages accompanying it, that English slaves embrace every occasion of deserting to the settlements of these nations.

I had such a proof of this religious attention in the Portuguese of the island of St. Thomas under the Line, as I shall always reflect on with pleasure. This island was
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once rich, populous, and full of fair churches, schools, convents, and other pious seminaries. The bishop of Loando was joint bishop of it, and visited it annually. It is now fallen much below its former state. But there are still upwards of 15000 negroe Christians in it, instructed to read and write, who daily attend divine worship, clean and well clad. Friars of all orders, and priests of every denomination, are chosen from among them, and are instructed in divine worship and the Christian rites. And though the ecclesiastick wealth is wasting fast away, yet there still remains that good order and moral conduct among them, which religion alone teaches, or can inspire. There are circumstances in popery that a sensible man cannot approve of; but the peculiar zeal with which the Portuguese have propagated the doctrine of Christ is truly meritorious, while the listless indifference of Protestants is to us a sinful reproach." Thus far this worthy officer.

This gentleman, during his short stay on the coasts, probably had not an opportunity of seeing those crowds of slaves that are driven down like so many sheep, perhaps

1000 miles from the sea coast, and who are generally inhabitants of villages that have been surrounded in the night-time by an armed force, and carried off to be sold to our traders on the coast. The annual exportation of slaves from Africa has exceeded 100,000. The sea coast, on which this inhuman refinement has been introduced by the European traders, could not have supplied such a number of culprits, without having been long ago depopulated.

From this account it plainly appears, that the slave trade occasions a degree of barbarous cruelty and oppression, which humanity, in its lowest state, must have revolted at, if not supported by avarice, and a lust for gain. We go on the coast, and tempt the natives, with what to them are articles of luxury, to sweep away, for the real or pretended fault of an individual, whole families in exchange, because they can supply us with no other articles that we desire to possess. But from the success of the Portuguese among them, it is clear, the Africans are capable of instruction and improvement, and that agriculture and arts might easily be introduced among them, and lay a foundation

tion for trade, that far from wounding humanity in this high degree, might raise and improve it, and be a blessing and advantage to all concerned.

Why might not the culture of sugar, tobacco, indigo, &c. be introduced into St. Thomas's? And why might not that island send out, in time, negroe teachers and artists to instruct and improve their brethren on the continent? By stopping the importation of slaves into our colonies, you increase the value of those who are already there; you oblige their masters to use them well, and improve their condition. But while ever the slave trade continues open to supply the ravages made by oppression and famine, one great inducement is wanting for treating slaves with humanity. Without meaning to cast any reproach on masters, who, like all other bodies, consist of good, bad, and indifferent men, I affirm, that till some check or new turn be given to the slave trade, it will be found a most difficult business to advance the condition of slaves in our colonies, so as to answer the fond wishes of piety and philanthropy respecting them.

Aug. 10,
1784.

F I N I S.

P O S T S C R I P T.

THE preceding Inquiry has been so long in the press, as to give the Author an opportunity of taking notice of a curious attack made on him by an anonymous writer, which charges him with having written certain " Thoughts on the Slavery of the Negroes in the American Colonies." These Thoughts the Author knew nothing of, and never saw them till they were in print. As far as he is the Author, therefore, of these Thoughts, the virulent abuse thrown on him by this enemy in the dark is altogether misapplied. But though from some strong traits in the style, he believes it would not be a difficult matter to trace his adversary out, he shall leave him to enjoy his uncontested victory, with his hearty prayers that he may learn and know the truth; and then the Thoughts that he gives to the publick will be very differently expressed.

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But as he appeals to my knowledge of certain facts, and silence may be construed into assent, I must beg leave to set him right.

There is no law (but an old neglected one in the Bible) in St. Kitts, to confine the punishment of a slave to thirty-nine lashes. And had Moses had the cart-whip in contemplation, he would have restrained his people to a much smaller number; for that instrument, in good hands, would soon have made the poor sufferer "vile in his brother's sight." There is an instance in Antigua of a white man being hanged for the murder of a negroe; but in the island to which he refers, I never knew of any inquisition for negroe blood. The pickling of the wounds from stripes is not confined to negroe freemen, as he may learn, if he will make a proper inquiry.

I wish his description of the treatment of sick and old slaves were true; but it was not quite so good in the quarter where I was best acquainted. His account of the peculium of slaves is altogether new to me; nor
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are "the means of even a bare livelihood" placed in the reach of four out of five slaves with whose situation I was ever acquainted.

It is more pleasing to me to communicate an account of the virtues and improvement of an honest African, that I have just met with in the late travels of Five Danish philosophers *, originally published in German, and since translated into French, in three volumes, quarto.—Farhan, a jet black negroe, was carried a boy into Arabia, and there sold to an officer in the court of the Imam or prince of Yemen. His master gave him every advantage of education, and entrusted him, as he grew up, with the management of his affairs. These he conducted with so much propriety and address, as to attract the notice of the prince, who took him near his person, and afterwards made him governor of Loheia, a city on the sea-coast. There our travellers found him ruling his people, as a kind father would his children. To these travellers he behaved with the utmost kindness, generosity, and even

* Voyage en Arabie & en d'autres Pays circonvoisins, par C. Niebuhr.

politeness, expressed the greatest fondness for their conversation, and a warm desire to learn and be informed of whatever was striking in Europeans. In short they, when speaking of him, call him the good Farhan, and had many sad opportunities of contrasting his behaviour with the other native Arabian governors. Here then we have an African towering above the subtle Arabian; and shall his country, by European influence, be still depressed in the scale of reason and human excellence? It is ignorant pride that fancies a distinction to its prejudice.



